

CONFERENCES & MEETINGS

WORKING SESSION OF THE IUCN COMMISSION ON NATIONAL PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS (CNPPA), HELD IN THE 'W' NATIONAL PARK, NIGER, DURING 18–22 MARCH 1987

This was the third meeting sponsored by CNPPA to review protected-area issues in the Afrotropical Realm, for which some 40 senior park agency officials from 17 countries gathered for the five-days' session. Included in the group were representatives from four aid agencies, indicating the growing donor interest in supporting biological-diversity projects. Also included were, most gratifyingly, representatives of the last two countries in Africa that have not yet created protected areas—Equatorial Guinea and Guinea Bissau.

The Working Session was inaugurated in Niamey, capital of Niger, by M. Attaher Darkoyé, Minister of Environment, who co-hosted the meeting. The technical sessions were co-chaired by Harold Eidsvik, Chairman of CNPPA, and Abdu Admou, Chief of Niger's Direction des Forêts et de la Faune (Fig. 1).

The main purpose of the meeting was to review the current status of protected areas in the 'francophone' African region. Twelve countries from West Africa presented status reports on various aspects of protected area management in their respective countries, which are being published in a proceedings volume.

A second output from the Working Session was a much-revised third edition of an 'Action Strategy for Protected Areas of the Afrotropical Realm'. This document, which had been developed over the preceding six months by CNPPA members in Africa, was modified by the participants to reflect better the priorities as currently defined in West Africa. The Action Strategy spells out numerous detailed objectives and activities, at both national and international levels, that must be strengthened or initiated to achieve more representative coverage, and more effective management of parks and reserves, in future. The Strategy itself builds on and reinforces IUCN's Bali Action Plan* and the Biosphere Reserve Action Plan,† and complements other protected-area action plans prepared for other tropical realms.

* See 'The Bali Declaration', *Environmental Conservation*, 10(1), p. 73, 1983.—Ed.

† See 'Action plan for Biosphere Reserves', by Michel Batisse, *Idem*, 12(1), pp. 17–27, map, 1985.



FIG. 1. Part of the platform at a Working Session. From left of right are seen Abdu Admou, Attaher Darkoyé, Harold Eidsvik, and Pierre Portas.

Aware that efforts to protect West Africa's natural heritage often go unrecognized, CNPPA also presented special valour awards for field officers in Tchad, Senegal, Ivory Coast, and Niger, who have performed special acts of bravery and merit in carrying out their duties. These included a token cash prize and were given to the following:

- Robert Thei, of Ivory Coast, who was seriously wounded when intercepting three armed poachers in the Tai National Park.
- Ahmed Tcholli, of Niger, who has been instrumental in involving local people in the planned Air Ténéré Reserve, demonstrating an exceptional ability to integrate protected areas with sustainable development in the Sahel.
- The wardens of the Zakouma National Park, in Tchad, who continued to protect the Park despite the period of civil disturbances, often without equipment or salaries.
- Mamadou Sadio, a warden in the Niokolo Koba National Park, in Senegal, for exceptional efforts in combating poaching in the Park.

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WORKSHOP ON BOTANICAL RESEARCH AND MANAGEMENT IN GALÁPAGOS, HELD AT THE CHARLES DARWIN RESEARCH STATION, SANTA CRUZ ISLAND, GALÁPAGOS ISLANDS, ECUADOR, DURING 13–19 APRIL 1987

This workshop-conference was held under the joint auspices of the Charles Darwin Foundation and the Galápagos National Park Service. Almost 100 invited participants, graduate students, administrative and clerical personnel, assistants and helpers, took part—including the staff of the Charles Darwin Station. Of this total, 30 were from outside and the rest from Ecuador, every opportunity being given to the Ecuadorean participants to have a major role in the discussions.

The Galápagos are an oceanic volcanic group of relatively small islands, lying astraddle the Equator about 500–600 miles (800–960 km) west of the mainland of Ecuador, which is one of the more interesting republics of South America. The largely unique native biotas of the islands have been disturbed by Man and his associated plants and animals—beginning with visits by pirates and whalers, who removed large numbers of the remarkable giant tortoises for provisions for their voyages.

Since those early times there has been a steadily increasing influence by Man, especially in the form of introduction, deliberately or accidentally, of alien plants and animals. These are altering, irreversibly, the character of one of the world's more interesting collective biotas. In addition, attempts at agriculture—mostly more destructive than productive—have gone on for well over a hundred years, in an environment that is eminently unsuited for agriculture. These attempts have caused serious alterations to considerable areas in the moister uplands of the larger islands. Alien animals, plants, and humans, now comprise major components of most of the island ecosystems in the archipelago.

Serious scientific research of major importance in the islands began with the visit of Charles Darwin on HMS